



[locked/work] mmm, dopamine



Chaz

 **cvillette**

<https://cvillette.livejournal.com/>

2008-07-06 16:07:00

MOOD: 😊 analytical

MUSIC: whatever's on tv

ABC News [doesn't know the difference between a serial killer and a spree killer](https://www.livejournal.com/away?to=http%3A//abcnews.go.com/TheLaw/wireStory%3Fid%3D5314979) (<https://www.livejournal.com/away?to=http%3A//abcnews.go.com/TheLaw/wireStory%3Fid%3D5314979>)

.

So it's Sunday afternoon and I'm sitting here watching TV and thinking about serial killers, which I guess is the hazard of the job. If it's still my job. I mean, I guess if I can't qual physically, I can still consult.

But anyway. There's a lot of confusion in the media about how serial killers work. Most of the misinformation revolves around the idea that they each follow a consistent M.O., or exhibit particular signatures or quirks, or have an invariable victimology, or keep grisly trophies, or insert themselves into investigations. And while it's true that a significant percentage of them do each of those things, those traits aren't diagnostic. Nor do they necessarily go out in search of their prey; some are more like... trap-door spiders.

Not all of them evolve, perfect their enactment of an irresistible fantasy. But a lot do. Not all of them are abuse survivors, but a lot are. Not all of them are men, but most are. Not all of them are American--in fact, as the world becomes more connected, it turns out that there are serial killers just about everywhere. They're not a modern phenomenon, no matter what certain amateur Ripperologists may maintain. Not all of them exhibit all or part of the so-called homicidal triad as children. But a lot do.

My job is all about playing those percentages.

If the theory that serial killers get habituated (functionally, become addicts) to killing holds true--that is, if they start as children, maybe starting fires, hurting animals--things that give them a sense of power, a dopamine buzz--and they develop those early experiments into bigger and better fantasies that give them a

bigger and better dopamine cookie, and of course there's the additional thrill of flouting authority, of getting away with something forbidden, of being *bad*--then it's obvious what makes them come back and do it again. All that power and control feels *awesome*.

It's exactly the same thing as when you get off a roller coaster giddy and laughing and thinking *do it again, do it again*. Or when you try to kiss a girl you really wanted to kiss, and she kisses you back.

Huh. And now I wonder if spree killers have a less active prefrontal cortex (instrumental in rationally inhibiting costly impulsive behavior) than serials.

Your prefrontal cortex is the part of your brain that reminds you of the consequences of your actions. I suspect it's not coincidence that the prefrontal cortex doesn't actually finish development until the early twenties. (Hey, that means there's still hope for mine!)

So maybe the right kind of early trauma can inhibit that development, or maybe what happens is that a kid who is under stress and getting his pleasure from hurting other things in response to that stress *habituates his own brain* to enjoy that kind of pain. That's some creepiness, that is.

The really interesting question, for me, is what makes them what they are? And how does it relate to what makes, you know, our guys what they are?

We also see some consistency in the way our guys get broken--a preliminary trauma, a later trauma, a mythology that seems to relate to (or parallel) the psychopathic sexual sadist's iterative ideations--fantasy culminating in reality. But unlike a psychopathic sexual sadist, our guys have the *means* to make their reality as good and fulfilling as the fantasy was. They don't have to approximate.

Saito could get it perfect *every time*.

So, you know, I'm thinking maybe the *It* feels pretty good, too. I mean, it's got to, right? I know it feels good when I solve a problem or get a mental click. It makes me want to do it again. And that happens to everybody, right?

Including the monsters.



[locked] Dream Journal

All right, unconscious mind. We're coming to an accommodation. If the dreams are you cleaning

Elvis doesn't live here anymore.

Hey there. Sorry about the drama. It was... it was an emotional decision, and I didn't

Poppets. Puppets. Poppet puppets. Scary.

36 comments



 Ometotchtli

July 7 2008, 01:02:37 UTC COLLAPSE

ABC. We send them press releases. That's sort of the point.

But do they read them? Nooooooooooooo.



 cvillette

July 7 2008, 01:11:34 UTC COLLAPSE

Spree killer, serial killer, mass murderer. It's all the same, right?

And if they get it wrong, the profile was faulty.



 Ometotchtli

July 7 2008, 01:44:09 UTC COLLAPSE

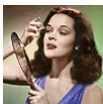
Go ahead, people, blame the government. We do.



 cvillette

July 7 2008, 01:47:09 UTC COLLAPSE

Dear Hollywood: it's a tool for exclusion, not an UNSUB seeking missile. Love, the FBI.



 Ometotchtli

July 7 2008, 02:02:46 UTC COLLAPSE

The difference between, "If he's got X, Y, and Z, he's your guy!" and "Your guy will probably exhibit X, Y, and Z" appears to be tough to spot. Go figure.



[cvillette](#)

[July 7 2008, 02:04:29 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

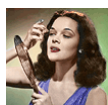
Journalists. And yet some of them appear to be trainable.



[ace_cub_reportr](#)

[July 7 2008, 02:05:16 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

We call that "becoming a tool of the man."



[Ometotchtli](#)

[July 7 2008, 02:10:05 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

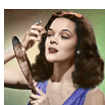
Are you saying you're trainable? Or that you aren't? Because hey, I love a good tool. *g*



[ace_cub_reportr](#)

[July 7 2008, 02:10:40 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

Any time you think you're woman enough.



[Ometotchtli](#)

[July 7 2008, 02:17:30 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

It's a deal. I'll put on lip gloss and you'll assemble the rolling cart in my office at work.



[ace_cub_reportr](#)

[July 7 2008, 02:22:06 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

My hero.



[cvillette](#)

[July 7 2008, 19:16:06 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

[CNN reads them, though.](#)



[trollcatz](#)

[July 7 2008, 01:05:48 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

Whaddaya mean, if it's still your job? You're on the injured list, but you're still one of our star players, man. The only reason we didn't bring you paperwork in the hospital is because Mom didn't know if you had a locking drawer in that bedside table.



[cvillette](#)

[July 7 2008, 01:10:46 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

If I don't recover enough for fieldwork? If I can't pass my PT, they're going to have to pasture me out, man.

I need to face that possibility.



[trollcatz](#)

[July 7 2008, 01:27:50 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

No, you *don't*. Not this week, anyway.

Did anyone in that damned hospital tell you what to expect from the healing process? Did they give you a timeline? It's different for everyone, of course, and it depends a lot on how thoroughly the patient sticks the self-care and PT routines.

But they let you out *Wednesday*. You haven't even got your cast off yet. You aren't going to feel this rotten forever. You're not even going to feel this rotten in two weeks.

If for some freaky reason you actually can't mend enough to go back into the field, you can start planning your retirement. But you should totally be field-worthy by this fall, and maybe sooner, if you do everything the whitecoats tell you and don't get all overly ambitious.

We need you, Platypus. If you're convinced you won't get well, that can be a self-fulfiller. And I would *hate* that.



[cvillette](#)

[July 7 2008, 01:31:21 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

...

you think I'll play the piano again, doc?



[trollcatz](#)

[July 7 2008, 01:42:59 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

For you, that joke only works if you use the violin. The Ngs tattled on you. *g*

And you know, if you decide you have to take over the heavy lifting, the Cowboy's feelings will be hurt.



[cvillette](#)

[July 7 2008, 01:46:08 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

...actually, I can play violin a little too. Or I used to.



[trollcatz](#)

[July 7 2008, 01:57:15 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

You SUCK! I can hardly play the car stereo! Dude, that's so cool.

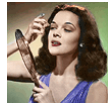


[cvillette](#)

[July 7 2008, 02:03:38 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

Music = math. Or maybe vice versa, because Mom did music. She didn't do math.

But once you understand that they're the same thing, it's just learning what to do with your fingers.



 [Ometotchtli](#)

[July 7 2008, 02:08:18 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

And that, ladies and gents, is why geeks are better at sex.

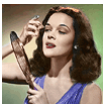


 [cvillette](#)

[July 7 2008, 02:10:09 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

er.

blush



 [Ometotchtli](#)

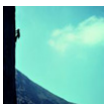
[July 7 2008, 01:14:57 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

Well, that and the extra thinking.

Which will bring us back to dopamine. As the song goes.

Successful problem solving = feel-good brain chemistry, for any brain. So is that the buzz we're getting? Or do we feel good because we're using It? Or a combination?

But if It makes our guys feel good, what would keep them from going 'n' going until they burn out, like a mouse on cocaine?



 [cvillette](#)

[July 7 2008, 01:21:30 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

I bet it's both. I dunno. You'd know better than me. I've got nothing to compare it to.

What stops 'em? What stops anybody from doing what feels good? Well, exhaustion. Migraine from overexertion, like I got in San Diego. Satiety. Wiring the pleasure centers in humans doesn't create addiction the way it does in rats: we're too complicated.

And a lot of our guys *do* burn out. Pop. BRAB! Like a bug-zapper. Like a puffball mushroom. Like a stinging bee.

How is that adaptive?



 [Ometotchtli](#)

[July 7 2008, 01:34:49 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

It's maladaptive. It's stupid. The organism *wants* to keep going.

You know all those old people you hear say, "I'm ready to go. I'll be glad to die. It's my time?" Yeah, bullshit. The body *freaks* at the approach of systems failure. It does not want to go.



 [cvillette](#)

[July 7 2008, 01:39:45 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

It's maladaptive for the *host*, anyway.



 [trollcatz](#)

[July 7 2008, 01:40:11 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

Yeah, but look at flowering plants. Blooming and setting seed means death for a lot of plants. But it's life for the plant's genetic material. So death for the individual = success for the species.

Except there's no evidence that It is a species. It may be just a new way for the brain to use the available neurons. In which case, you guys are adaptive and an advance in brain function, and the bad guys are evolutionary lab failures.

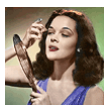


 [cvillette](#)

[July 7 2008, 01:45:04 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

...Boy, I like that theory an awful lot. And it kind of fits certain available evidence. Or I can wish it into fitting. Which makes me suspicious of it, because it's awful comforting.

It also kind of makes me wish we knew something about your bioparents, Hafs.



 [Ometotchtli](#)

[July 7 2008, 01:59:04 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

You and El Magnifico.



 [cvillette](#)

[July 7 2008, 02:01:30 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

And not you. I know.

Hey, I've already scraped bottom on that one, though! You could only do better!

Gah. You know what, screw this. Who wants to go to a midnight showing of Hellboy Thursday night/Friday morning?



 [trollcatz](#)

[July 7 2008, 02:05:52 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

I <3 Hellboy. Can I ask T?



 [cvillette](#)


[July 7 2008, 02:08:54 UTC](#)

[COLLAPSE](#)

Dude. Of course you can. And I'll see if Tasha and her boat-anchor want to come.

...will you pick me up?

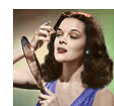


 [trollcatz](#)

[July 7 2008, 02:11:40 UTC](#)

[COLLAPSE](#)

Betcha!




 [Ometotchtli](#)

[July 7 2008, 02:06:38 UTC](#)

[COLLAPSE](#)

Moi, petit. Count me in.



 [ace_cub_reportr](#)

[July 7 2008, 02:09:31 UTC](#)

[COLLAPSE](#)

Oh, so old. Midnight showings? *groans*

Maybe if I have a long nap....



 [trollcatz](#)

[July 7 2008, 02:13:38 UTC](#)

[COLLAPSE](#)

You make me laff 'n' laff. You're the one who stayed awake and fully functional in NM while I literally fell asleep in mid-phone call.

[locked] Dream Journal

All right, unconscious mind. We're coming to an accommodation. If the dreams are you cleaning

Elvis doesn't live here anymore.

Hey there. Sorry about the drama. It was... it was an emotional decision, and I didn't

Poppets. Puppets. Poppet
puppets. Scary.